

# NEW ENTERPRISE MODELS IN RURAL AREAS IN THE CONTEXT OF NEW RURAL DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

*In a rural context, on the example of the Szeklerland region of Eastern Transylvania (Romania), based on the relevant literature and an exploratory research, our study analyses the question of how and to what extent the components related to the new economy phenomenon in new, small-scale enterprises can be detected. In this regard, we analyzed 30 interviews – 17 women and 13 men, aged 25-35 years – conducted with founders and managers of innovative enterprises, and case studies. The research was conducted in 2019-2020. We applied the methodology of the “contextual turn” approach (Welter, 2011) and the social constructive perspective (Jack–Anderson, 2002; Korsgaard–Anderson, 2011).*

*The main focus of the study is the analysis of the regional context and the three components of new economy characteristics referring to the starting, running and representing enterprises (1. incorporating elements of individual habitus, 2. the role of personal beliefs and values, 3. the role of the social environment in the*

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*development and operation of the enterprise), which bring changes to regional entrepreneurial practices by prioritizing the personal characteristics of entrepreneurs.*

Keywords: innovative enterprises, enterprise models, social innovation, contextual turn, new economy

## Introduction

Literature on rural research and development as well as professionals engaged in rural development practices used to (and still often do) treat it as evidence that the development of rural areas cannot, under any circumstances, do without the involvement of external resources (Lowe et al., 1995; Terluin, 2003; Stockdale et al., 2000), which include first of all financial support, investment, and technological as well as knowledge transfer. With the new rural development paradigm (Van der Ploeg, 1994; Van der Ploeg et al., 2000; Murdoch, 2000; Ward, 2002; OECD, 2006; Bosworth–Willett, 2011) rising to prominence, this issue is worth investigating also from a different perspective. In consideration of this paradigm, researchers point out a few essential features of the rural development process such as: enhanced role of local values and conditions (see Christopher Ray, 1998), increased exposure of the roles that local actors and initiatives play (see Tisenkopfs, 1999; Wellbrock–Roep, 2014), and changed indicators of rural development efficiency. It is not the investment level that will take on the role of the most important indicator but the employment rate of the local population considering the enterprises (Capello, 2007). In the context of this paradigm shift, one could also ask how it is appropriate in a rural area to interpret the meaning and social role of innovation and of innovative initiatives (Pato, 2020) on the one hand and what innovation processes the local actors of rural areas can launch and operate on the other. Under this approach, an important group of actors can be represented by an enterprise group in a rural area, whose members rely on the region's resources (raw materials, values, landscape features, etc.) and act in keeping with the needs of the rural society in their efforts to establish and operate businesses that qualify as innovations in terms of the model and the substantial elements of the operation in that particular rural area and whose characteristics show close resemblance to those of new economy.

Drawing on the results of a *Domus* group research programme<sup>2</sup> carried out in the year 2020 and based on the example of the region of Szeklerland located in Eastern Transylvania (Romania), our study is conducted in a rural context and looks into how and to what extent the components linked by the literature to the phenomena associated with new economy can be detected in the recently launched small-scale and innovative enterprises.

A vast number of the innovative enterprises involved in the analysis have been established over the recent years – these are small businesses founded by young people, while their operating model, their founders' attitude and narratives all carry several components that professional approaches oftentimes emphasize in their analyses related to the topic of new economy (e.g. Lash–Urry, 1994; Henning, 2001; Scott, 2010; Czako, 2001; Baji, 2014, 2015). Some of these elements are as follows: reliance on the characteristics of a given social context, innovation-centredness, the growing role of knowledge, and changes in the modes of social engagement and social thematization (e.g. Henning, 2001; Damaskopoulos–Evgeniou, 2003; Shields–Vivanco, 2004; Drabenstott–Henderson, 2006; Brown–Graham–Lambe, 2008; Santos, 2018).

Nowadays, there is still a low representation of the innovative, knowledge-based, and person-centred business model in the region, and the process of their social representation is also in its infancy. Recent initiatives organized in accordance with innovative business models give proof of – besides economic efficiency – the explicitly defined social benefits and the need for as well as the practice of social engagement that goes beyond occasional donations. A critical realization of present-day professional approaches related to the operation of market economy (Capello, 2007) is that the economic segment and the ideologies/narratives addressing it are closely correlated, and recently these correlations can be connected with geographic-social spaces as well. It is our belief that such endeavours can be identified – under various forms but, for now, only experimental in their nature – in the case of the enterprises involved in our analysis.

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<sup>2</sup> Group research programme announced by Domus in 2020 and entitled *Vállalkozások reprezentációjának változása vidéki térségben* (Changes in the Representation of Enterprises in Rural Areas) – supported by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

Subsequent to the introductory part and the chapter presenting the literature review, the study goes on to provide an outline of the regional context and analyse three components (1. integration of the elements of the individual's habitus, 2. the role of personal beliefs and values, 3. the role of the social context in the development and operation of businesses) of the characteristic features of new economy that involve changes in the regional management practice.

## **Literature Review**

The professional framework of our analysis is based on two approaches: first of all, on professional works addressing the paradigm shift particularly prevalent in the 1970s and associated with new economy, and, secondly, on ideas related to changes in social solidarity, more specifically to the enhanced role of reflexive solidarity (on the concept of informal, open-ended cooperation, see: Sennet, 2011; Bauman, 2016 – qtd in Takács, 2018: 170–173). Both approaches provide certain criteria for analysis and interpretation, which can be observed more or less and on a regular or occasional basis in the perspective and practice of the entrepreneurs under study as well as in the operation of the corresponding enterprises.

Specialized works that fall under the subject area of new economy do not form a consistent set of criteria for analysis and interpretation, but they provide an outline for a great many conceptual and methodological approaches that can offer guidelines also for analysers of regional areas showing the first signs of new economy. Based on professional works (e.g. Henning, 2001; Damaskopoulos–Evgeniou, 2003) aimed explicitly at the operation of enterprises in the context of the paradigm shift associated with the concept of new economy, we believe it is necessary to point out some considerations such as: the importance of information, new strategies and practices, technological transformations, network-orientedness, organizational and knowledge generation capacities of enterprises, and the importance of human capital as opposed to physical capital. In terms of the operation of enterprises, relevant features of new economy include prioritization of knowledge, process-oriented approach, virtual integration (instead of vertical), and the appreciation of corporate culture and personal guidance (Czakó, 2001). Both of the above enumerations contain several elements (e.g. the role of information and knowledge, the importance of

human capital, virtual integration, and others) that can already be encountered in the region under study, even if not as a paradigm shift but as an attempt in this regard.

For the purposes of our analysis, we should mention Alan J. Scott's (2010) much-quoted study as a professional reference. The author uses the term "cultural economy" – however, in the spirit of cultural turn and in connection with shifting the focus to the products' connotations (Lash–Urry, 1994), this term refers to the new forms of production and work, the "postmodern goods". In respect of products, all of this implies that the products of the economic activity acquire cultural connotations and allow for consumers to identify themselves with the product (or even with its location, origin, or manufacturing method) and make use of its creative content so as to serve their own identification. This goes hand in hand with flexible specialization, the promotion of craftsmanship, and not least the market penetration of small businesses, preference of the diversity and specificity of labour force over standardization, cooperation and mutual learning between entrepreneurs, and efforts towards coexistence (see Baji, 2014, 2015). Several components of this process are visible in the studied region, although far from being organized into a unified operating model.

Albeit several analysts would initially link the phenomena associated with new economy to urban areas, its analysis in the rural context has now become relevant. Various specialized papers treat the role of rural areas and rural communities in relation to new economy. They make an investigation particularly into how rural communities can, in the context of the 21st-century changes, contribute to the development of national economy through the appreciation of the role of technology (Shields–Vivanco, 2004; Drabenstott–Henderson, 2006; Brown–Graham–Lambe, 2008; Santos, 2018).

## **Study Area**

The regional innovative role of the new enterprises displaying the characteristics of new economy can be defined with more precision if we have an adequate knowledge of the regional factors and processes that have produced the above-indicated parallelism between society and the business sector and have maintained it following the 1989 regime change. Taking a comprehensive stock of all these factors

and processes would require a separate study, wherefore this paper includes only a brief summary of the relevant findings.

In this chapter, based on the research programs – the analysis of agricultural innovation processes since 2011 (Biró–Magyar 2013, 2017, 2019, Biró–Sárosi–Blága, 2020), household surveys (2004, 2011) and the Szeklerland Foresight Programme (2008) – of the WAC – Center for Regional and Anthropological Research, which has been operating for almost 30 years in Miercurea-Ciuc, we consider it reasonable to provide below a more detailed presentation of the regional social context and of the regional entrepreneurship developed over the recent decades because it is in this context that the innovation content and function of new enterprises associated with new economy features is defined. The studied Szeklerland region is a rural area situated in the central part of Romania, has no administrative boundaries, and is made up of small towns – with 10–50,000 inhabitants – and their catchment areas. As it is not an official region, the size of its territory (Harghita and Covasna counties and a part of Mureş County) and the number of its population (600,000) is not official.

Works treating the history of the regional society describe the Szeklerland region as an agricultural society (Szádeczky, 1927; Egyed, 2013; Vámszer, 2000; Venczel, 1980) that is characterized by a holistic family farming practice seeking self-sufficiency and relying on own resources on the one hand (Biró et al., 1994a, 1994b; Biró, 2006; Laki–Biró, 2001) and by engagement in agricultural, livestock farming, and forest management practices in the form of community assets on the other hand. Rural researchers take the view that in order for the family-scale agricultural activity to function as a farm business, four essential components are required (on this issue, see: Van der Ploeg, 1994 – qtd. in Ventura, 2008: 154). One of the major components: business mindset, planning, and activity (market component) is traditionally missing from the family lifestyle and farming practice, which is dominant in this region; therefore, it has been very rare for family farms, being a general feature of this region, to develop into private businesses. By the same token, the forms of community property and farming as a dominant characteristic of the region did not emerge as sole proprietorships either. The forms of economic (industrial) activities include lumbering and woodworking (sawmills) that have been gaining ground ever since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and commercial activities (shops) operated in the settlements. The operators/owners involved in these two forms of economic activity were extra-regional actors or members of other ethnic groups. Besides a lack of knowledge in

terms of entrepreneurship, this also played its part in seeing entrepreneurship as something “extraneous”.

Subsequent to the 1962 completion of collectivization and following a short transitional period, the region’s modernization and industrialization was fast underway. Nonetheless, the population’s attitude towards this process and economic structure remained ambivalent (Bodó, 2004).

Considering the regional society under analysis, the structure and operating model of the socialist economy did not gain the social acceptance of the economic and entrepreneurial activity and did not lead to the development of knowledge, models of behaviour, and narratives that would have – inherently – made entrepreneurship part of the regional society’s operating model.

The one-one and a half decades following the 1989 regime change in Romania completely transformed the region’s economic structure. The large socialist factories of the previous era were liquidated virtually without any exception, jobs were lost, and the accumulated professional know-how lost its operational framework. In a national comparison, a low number of business initiatives could be observed over the period of three decades following the regime change, but the process of business creation was dynamic and basically experimental in nature (plenty of individual and family initiatives, high fluctuations). A very small fraction of the enterprises developed in the region came into existence through the privatization of the businesses already operating in the pre-1989 period, while the overwhelming majority of them were set up in the form of new ventures based on professional and managerial competences acquired during the period before 1989, foreign investments thus playing only a marginal role (Biró et al., 1995).

Szeklerland is basically a rural and economically marginalized area (Benedek, 2020; Kerekes – Balla, 2020). Some of its most important features are: rural and small-town settlement structure; distance from large urban or industrial centres; high level of agricultural involvement; starting from the 60s, the region came under significant influence from industrial development based on centralized socialist planned economy and from the associated urbanization trend. The population of the small towns doubled or even tripled in size, while factories employing both male and female labour force were built. However, the industrial and labour market structure developed within a short timeframe in the 1970s would be practically disintegrated in its entirety following the 1989 regime change in Romania, the agriculture-based self-

sufficient family farming model came to be restored, and labour migration to foreign countries played a significant role. Similarly, it should be noted that the region did not become a receiving milieu for substantial external capital investments. Industrial and economic indicators reveal that this region has remained in a disadvantaged position to this day compared to most other regions in the country.

The economic structure and entrepreneurship developed in this period can be defined by three characteristic features, whose combination – besides the above-indicated sociohistorical specificities – formed a regional context and continues to form one for the new economy type of businesses. These three characteristics can be briefly summarized as follows:

- Business operation in the first period was dominated by seeking primary capital accumulation. Entrepreneurship in this initial period generated a relatively significant and negative social attitude in the region. Although placed in a new context, in essence they carry on the habitus of the managers who were in charge of the pre-1989 factories.
- Social engagement primarily means acts of donation. One can rarely encounter a practice where social engagement becomes an integral part of establishing a business or of its operating model.
- The core element of the attitude towards professional competences is that the operation of a business needs so much, and only so much, competence as required by the production/technological process at hand. There is no demand on the part of the entrepreneurial segment for the new types of competences that have emerged in this region, too, through the young professionals (professional use of digital tools and content, management competences, information acquisition techniques, relationship culture, familiarity with new technologies, etc.).

Compared to the above-outlined dominant model in the region, the enterprises placed under analysis in this study reveal a different kind of operating model and different patterns of social embeddedness, or, to be more specific: they are just taking shape for now. The key point of this otherness is that they build to a much greater extent and in a much more varied way upon the regional social context readily available for them and place particular emphasis on the social representation of this

embeddedness. The socio-economic context of their appearance and operation is given by the above-mentioned dominant model, and this relationship makes the initiatives bearing the features of new economy a regional-scale innovation.

## Methodology

The paper is based on semi-structured interviews, review of the relevant regional literature, analysis of the social context of regional entrepreneurship, and the examination of the relevant legislation and support policies. The methods used in the framework of the research programme were interview-based data collection according to the method of theoretical sampling (e.g. Glaser and Straus. 1967; Miles and Huberman, 1994).

For the purposes of the programme, a total number of 30 interviews – 17 women and 13 men, aged 25-35 years – were conducted with founders and managers of innovative, mainly one-person and small enterprises. The selection of interview subjects took consideration of the following aspects:

- The enterprise/initiative (1) intentionally or (2) spontaneously, but either way explicitly, is linked to a settlement (locality) or a large or small region, and the activity or the product is connected to a physical place, a socio-geographical space. The forms of connection are: (a) the designation includes the given space or place; (b) utilization of local-regional resources, values, or raw materials/ingredients; (c) local knowledge, experiences, traditions; (d) local labour force; (e) objectives or interests related to settlement development; (f) integration into local events; (g) representation of the local (settlement-scale) community's interests (e.g. bringing together the local entrepreneurs, taking initiatives in the interest of the local community, or local development aspects).
- The business or initiative is associated with or based on environmental values, addresses environment protection or integrates it into the business. This can be either natural or built (living) environment.
- Commitment to health objectives or showing convergence with them.

- Giving priority to craftsmanship and uniqueness in production/manufacturing technologies and processes over the mass/serial nature of the production process or machine technology.
- Alignment with transparency and reliability requirements (showing my methods, the raw materials/ingredients I use, etc.).
- Customer service is not only about the product, but the producer's/entrepreneur's personality also comes to the fore. This may be a producer, organizer, public life, professional, or representative role.

In the course of the interview analysis (analysis of narratives), we also relied on Gergen-Gergen's (1984) thesis, based on which there is a strong need for communication when it comes to activities considered as innovative compared to the environment, this way narratives being created wherein members of the innovative group formulate their own activities in relation to their own environment. This is related to the fact that individuals involved in the analysed cases attach particular importance to social thematization and social embeddedness (Gergen-Gergen, 1984).

Using the method of the analysis of narratives, the following themes were analysed:

- reasons and circumstances for starting the business
- interpretation of the regional entrepreneurial context
- components of the Strat-up model (practices, interpretations)
- social representation goals, needs, opportunities
- social representation initiatives, practices

### **Analysis: New Economy Components in the Region**

Innovative initiatives included in the analysis are small businesses established at most 3-4 years before 2020. Their scope of activities covers a wide range from manufacturing handmade products through agricultural innovation to various services. They came into existence as individual experiments (not through directly incentivizing each other), and they sought to contact and found each other only subsequently. There have been some attempts in the region aiming to integrate the

existing individual initiatives into an organizational framework (business incubator, utilization of already existing cluster frameworks, establishing new clusters), but their number is very low. Additionally, organizational structures that have been in operation for some time (local product fairs, craft fairs, civil society organizations, start-up funds, or sectoral agricultural subsidies) are utilized as operational frameworks.

We looked into the interview subjects' statements, attitudes, and entrepreneurship as well as the businesses' social representation practices with a view to identify the components that significantly differ from the regional context that is represented by the dominant model of the economic structure.

In the following, we will provide a summarized description of our analysis results, once again stressing that this is a small-scale exploratory research project whose main objective cannot go beyond the regional professional and public thematization of the studied phenomenon. The development and operation of the entrepreneurial role as well as of the enterprise are discussed together in our analysis.

The elements associated with the paradigm of new economy are grouped together in three main sections and examined accordingly:

- engagement of the personal self, modes of integrating the elements of individual habitus;
- the role of beliefs and values;
- the role of social context in business creation.

### **Engagement of the Personal Self, Modes of Integrating the Elements of Individual Habitus**

The recorded texts of the interview subjects often include the "self", in many linguistic forms and linked to various content. Sometimes this emerges as a reference point, while other times the focus is on the active self, and yet other times the analysing, evaluating, reflecting self comes to the fore. The frequency and diversity observed with the appearance and representation of the self may be indicative not only of the businesses' person dependence and of the low degree of their institutionalization but also of a business-building and -operating model that is

different from the regional economic environment. The engagement of an individuality, of a personal habitus takes a number of forms as can be seen below:

*A whole lot of things can be combined in this activity. It is very difficult for me to head along a single track (...) I make soaps, but that is not entirely true because I also like to bake, for that matter... I am very fond of herbs and make use of them in producing many of the soaps. It is really the case that I love to create using my hands... Hygiene is yet another quite important issue to me.* (Interview Subject no. 1)

The following frequently encountered modes of representations of the personal self in the narratives were recorded:

- The development of a business is often derived from personal traits. Typical examples are hobbies, manual skills, or having an affinity for something.
- Many elements of the personal competences and abilities are consciously, explicitly associated with the entrepreneurial activity. It is not simply a matter of utilization, functional adaptation but a modular integration as a result of which the personal character (being part of the self) of the personal component integrated into the entrepreneurial activity is maintained. A case in point is the integration into the entrepreneurial activity of the elements of the knowledge and abilities acquired during professional training and making reference to these built-in elements or the integration of certain features of the individual values, beliefs and making reference to them.
- A minor role is allocated to formalized relations in the operation of a business (the positioning of a management position or of a representative role and the operation of narratives associated therewith, status-based and/or narrative-based distance between the enterprise as a whole and the personal role); instead, it can be observed that personality and leadership role “dissolve” in some sense in the entrepreneurial activity. The leadership role tends to function more like an animator, and there is less effort made to develop an external/superior position in relation to the business as a whole or the entire activity process.

- The sense of achievement being linked to the work process as well, and not only to the product or its marketing, is also indicative of the importance of personal participation (involvement).

The relationship between the enterprise and the person is one of equality, identity rather than representative in nature. The entrepreneur appears not only as proprietor or administrative manager (often this is not even mentioned) but as the owner of the whole or the majority of the set of competences necessary to operate the enterprise. "The enterprise is my personality!" It is not stressing on the ownership of a material sort that is given a central role (founder, investor, or beneficiary) in this self-definition but rather the individual objective, style, and commitment.

### **The Role of Beliefs and Values**

Respondents often make reference to values, principles, and beliefs that play a vital role in the development and/or operation of the enterprise. These refer to social values that have recently come into focus in this region. Some typical examples are: environment protection, need for abandoning mass production and mass products, prioritizing health protection in the production and consumption of foods, use of natural ingredients, stressing community interests instead of/besides profit making, appreciation of handicraft production, community development, and protection of local features. These community values and beliefs do not yet emerge as a comprehensive movement in the region under study; this would account for the fact that in the interview subjects' statements this type of ideological content is thematized as an objective to be pursued, as an awareness-raising task. In this setting, one's own business appears as social engagement, occasionally complemented by accentuated moral content or a sense of mission. The texts of the interviews suggest that these principles and beliefs are powerfully represented personal content elements, components of entrepreneurial habitus and activity on the one hand and that they are also formulated as a wider social objective or need that the interview subject – judged by his/her statement – tries to connect with on the other hand. These cases reveal a form of entrepreneurial social engagement – in some cases merely in the form of endeavours, objectives, while in other cases as a practice – where the business and the product act or try to act as representatives of some sort of community cause/interest.

The values and beliefs can be found in the interview texts in the form of references, normative principles, and arguments alike.

*Natural things are far better, they help us a lot more... (...) Actually, I would really like to educate women a bit on conscious skin care. It is very important what our body absorbs through the skin. There is a demand for it, by the way. People have started to live more consciously. It is true that they need some more time and help, but I can see that there is a demand for these products. (Interview Subject no. 7)*

### **The Role of Social Context in Business Creation**

Planning, developing, and operating a business as well as having a reflection thereon is a process that incorporates through many paths and in multiple ways the elements of the relevant social environment wherein the enterprise concerned operates. Generally speaking, the individuals setting up the businesses make use of the social and environmental conditions (values, interests, needs) that are available to them. All the same, the analysed responses suggest that there is more to it than that. If we are to capture the role of the social and environmental context more accurately, we should rather say that entrepreneurs do not pick out some of its elements that are useful to them and adapt these to their entrepreneurial ideas and practice but that they permanently and structurally build their businesses upon certain elements of the social, environmental context. They do not base their activities exclusively on local features (e.g. raw materials), labour force, and consumer demands but also on some factors such as social values and attitudes. They seek to make – of course, to varying degrees and with mixed results – their business an integral part, a quasi “product” of the social and natural environment relevant for them.

Typical procedures are: getting in tune with the way the local or regional society functions, recycling of materials and products, the holistic nature of the product (making sure that it contains extra information, data), the product’s usefulness or problem-solving quality, or connecting the product to events or community experiences.

*We are trying to find solutions, not just theoretically but practically, and put them into practice. If organizing a monthly fair sounds like a good idea, then, to spice things up a little bit, we need to combine it with a great*

*family fun day, where people can meet up, enjoy each other's company, and exchange experiences, so as to make it attractive for customers. (...) It is not difficult to work it out as, being locals, we have a keen insight of the areas [activities] that should be done and that we can cover... (Interview Subject no. 12)*

## Summary

The launching of the research programme was driven by the observation that, even though the region is both economically and in terms of the enterprises' number, size, and competitiveness in a disadvantaged position in Romania, there is a growing number of new businesses and initiatives that in their entrepreneurial mindset/habitus show a divergent path from the type of entrepreneurship that has been traditionally characteristic of the region, which can be interpreted as innovation not only economically but from a social perspective as well. Consequently, it represents a real development potential for the region. Based on our observations so far, this paradigm shift is still in its infancy, and this changing of the situation calls for new approaches with regard to the evolution of the regional economic processes as well as of the entrepreneurial roles.

As a summary of our research results, the following should be highlighted:

- The operation of the enterprises under study reveal an extremely strong engagement of the personal self compared to the regional context.
- Personal beliefs and values are entwined with entrepreneurship, and they are also heavily reflected in the production process, the product itself, and the presentation of the product.
- A particularly essential part of business operation is the relevant social environment, the relationship with it, which means not only the integration of the social and environmental conditions and values but building the operation of the enterprise upon the given social context. Respondents seek to make – of course, to varying degrees and with mixed results – their business an integral part, a quasi “product” of the social and natural environment relevant for them.

Our analysis indicates that a social-interest model is taking shape in the entrepreneurial mentality/practice of the Szeklerland region in terms of both operation and social representation. One of the distinct features of this model is that the “alienation” between the economic segment and the social context is increasingly eliminated compared to the prevailing traditional model in the region, while the activity and the practice of the entrepreneur’s social embeddedness function at various levels and under many forms simultaneously.

Components that can be associated with the new economy approach and practice and the set of elements indicating reflexive solidarity suggest that an innovative paradigm can be outlined in the establishment and operation of the studied enterprises as well as in the entrepreneurs’ objectives, activities, and values, which greatly differs from the dominant regional entrepreneurial/business operation paradigm. These innovative features are present in varying quantities and in different ways in each enterprise and entrepreneurial activity.

Further analyses are required for a better understanding of the details and with a view to establishing where this essentially dynamic and creative regional process is heading. Our research results can be exploited in the fields of both policy design and social thematization; they provide opportunities to plan and launch more complex, longer-term research addressing a larger target group and also to undertake smaller-scale fact-finding research focusing on the particular subfields.

The analysis results of the presented research argue for the fact that the elements of the entrepreneurial model marked as innovative are present in the region at various levels and in many ways. At the current stage, it has a considerably low share (capital size, numerical weight, employment rate, etc.) of the regional economic structure. The initiatives themselves are still in their early stages in most of the cases. However, due to the different nature of their operating models, the modes of their social engagement, and the level of their public thematization, they make a heavy and impressive presence and draw a lot of attention – the situation thus created generates followers on the one hand and public visibility and acceptance (social embeddedness) on the other.

There are three questions that we deem appropriate to ask with a view to further analyses, as follows:

- Are there any regional reserves for the regional intensification of the paradigm shift indicated in the study, and if any, which are those?
- What regional policy programme or subsidization practice could be appropriate to reinforce this trend of paradigm shift?
- Also, we cannot set aside the question as to what are the ways in which and to what extent the model of economic and social representation bearing the features of reflexive solidarity can be integrated into a social context wherein traditional solidarity (selective and mutual) is still present as a solid feature.

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